

Hidden Sakura Blossom

by Whimsicott

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Summary: A young, rogue oni finds herself running away from home...and into a familiar azure-eyed man's embrace. OC. Rated T for mild language and such...rating is subject to change.

1. Azure Eyes

Hello people! ^_^ Again I bring you another fanfic (hopefully, I'll actually finish this one 8U). Well, I have but one warning which is the presence of an OC *u* If youdon't like them, my apologies in advance :3

This takes place after the Battle at Benten Daiba, with the four only "unspecified"deaths (Hijikata, Harada, Saitou, andShinpachi), so yes...Okita and Heisuke are stillgone ;u; (I might make a Fanfic just for them though :3)

Also, I use honorifics in this Fanfic...please don't hesitate to correct me if I use one incorrectly

Anyway, I will stop prolonging the time and allow you to read it now

Disclaimer: Hakuouki and it's characters do not belong to me...if they did, the good characters would not have died 8UUU

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><p>Ch.1 Azure Eyes:

The rushing current of the water shoved me in a rough to-and-fro manner. The constant movement had me coughing up bucketfuls of icy-cold water; why on earth did I have to run away from home in the middle of winter? Gaspings in pain, I winced as the water slammed unrelentingly up against my wound: the reason for my leave. Still fresh, the sword wound on the side of my neck was still bleeding

furiously, and throbbing with the water's constant pounding. I continued my struggle through the icy trench of the river nonetheless, and felt a sudden surge of relief when I saw the familiar lump that was land.

Kicking my numb legs, I urged myself closer to the snow-covered hill, eyes watering from the sudden blast of snowy wind. The snow on the bank of the hill was much more welcome than the icy water in the river. Stumbling up, I shivered as another blast of wind blew me over. Collapsing on the ground, I let the exhaustion catch up to me; I looked to my side and saw the sticky trail of blood still flowing profusely from my neck...a red flower blossoming atop the snowy ground. Shuddering, I heard the light sound of someone walking by...soon joined by another. I stiffened, they were walking towards painfully into an upright position, I gripped the hilt of my katana and removed it quietly from its sheath. Placing my free hand over my wound in order to stem the flow, I listened intently, waiting to attack.

"Well, isn't that such a dangerous toy, for such a little girl to play with?"

Whipping around, I let the blade slice through the frozen air, intent on driving the weapon through flesh and muscle. Nothing. The deep, ravenous, deranged voice laughed crazily. My eyes narrowed as I took in his features; white hair, flashing red eyes, elongated nails, and the wild, ferocious attitude. There was only one proper conclusion I could come to; the guy was a Rasetsu.

Well shoot. Just my luck.

Wincing, I rolled my shoulders (glad that the wound seemed to have closed) and lashed out at him with a flick of my left hand, sending a barrage of small blades towards the monster. One seemed to have hit its target, for he wavered and a pool of blood painted itself upon his tattered shirt. Seeming a bit confused, he wobbled then ran at me with a vengeance... the white hair billowing, red eyes flashing, and the nails glinting in the moon's soft light. Without actually spurring it, I could feel my change; horns sprouted from my forehead, my vision changed from normal to acutely sharp, and my waist-length black hair soon matched the powdery snow. In less than a second, I had changed into my Oni form. Flashing in front of him, I deftly ran the katana through the small of his chest, cutting through bone and muscle...straight through the heart. He continued to smile creepily at me as I removed the blade and flicked the blood across the snow. His final, lifeless growl still unsettled me.

Wincing, I sheathed the katana, cursing inwardly towards myself. My wound had reopened. I heard it then; a noise, quiet, but still distinctly noticeable in the silent din. I glanced over my shoulder...nothing. Hmm. I shrugged it off, and turned my attention towards my wound. Indeed, it had reopened, a thin trickle of blood slid down my neck. As I tended to the wound, I released my Oni demon...returning to my original form.

Big mistake.

I didn't hear the low growl until the guy was upon me. Shoving me to the ground, he clasped his hands around my neck, his raspy voice coiling disgustingly about my ears. "Blood...give me your blood...I

need..."

Writheing, I struggled to dislodge the man, to no avail. I could only feebly struggle underneath his immense weight. His wet, slimy tongue sliding over my wound nearly sent me over. I wanted to scream, to run his heart through with my katana. Nothing.

The seconds seemed to blend together, and my vision was blurring around the edges. So...I had run away from home for this? I ran, thinking I was escaping Death, only to run back into his open arms? The thought seemed to rip the last bit of my sanity to shreds. Opening my mouth, I let loose with a loud effeminate scream...

...and let darkness embrace me...Nothing.

* * *

><p>"Nnngh..." A bright light hit my eyes, slowly I blinked gently trying to get used to the new lighting. Remembering the previous events, and waking up in a new place only meant that I had, somehow, survived. I have to remember to thank my saviors. And then I opened my eyes.

Big brown eyes met mine. Huh?

"Ne! You're awake!" The strange girl stared down at me in wonder, then suddenly withdrew away from me...only to return a second later with a steaming cup of...something. Tea maybe? "Here, this will make you feel better." I sat up gingerly, noting my carefully bandaged neck, and accepted the warm, proffered cup. Eyeing the contents quickly, I took a small sip...yep, it was tea, and _good _tea at that. "Ah, arigatou, kind lady." I bowed my head towards her slightly, making sure not to pull the bandage.

She smiled delicately, and rose from her previous sitting position, which was next to the bed I occupied. "Ano...you may call me Chizuru."

"Arigatou Chizuru-san." I gave her a quick smile, to which she returned. She turned toward the beige sliding shoji screens, and opened one softly, "I'll return shortly in order to collect your cup and remove your bandage, okay?" I nodded, and she took her leave. _Hmm...Chizuru...where have I heard that name? _I brushed the thought away, and surveyed the current room I was in. It was a simple tatami style room, beige, with a nice lamp in the corner. I could hear a quiet trickle of pond water outside. I was in a house, that was easy to see...I wonder who else lived here.

My reverie was broken by the sliding door reopening, revealing Chizuru and...someone else. I sat my empty cup on the floor and watched them as they entered. It was a man that came with her, holding a small bucket and a cloth. He had a deep blue-ish hair color, and wore a simple navy blue yukata with a white scarf draped around his neck. He wore a simple expression, one of apathetic disinterest. "Ah, miss, this is the man who saved your life, Saitou Hajime."

I blinked a few times, finally registering her words, "Oh, arigatou Saitou-san, I'm very much in debt to you." I dipped my head slightly

once more.

"You needn't worry about being in debt to me...I simply did my job." His voice was a cool, deep resonating sound that definitely sent shivers down my spine. I flinched when Chizuru started to undo my bandage, totally unaware of her closeness. "Sorry...by the way, what would your name be? I can't walk around continuously calling you 'miss', now can't I?" She smiled gently while unwrapping the sheets of cotton.

I thought about it for only a second...it wouldn't matter if I told them my name, no one would know who I was in the first place, my oni line had 'died' off years ago. "Kitabatake Akane, that's my name." I kept my eyes glued to the wall above Saitou's head.

"Oh...that's a really pretty name. Well, Saitou-san, don't you think it's nice too?" Chizuru looked over her shoulder, grinning.

"Yes, I think it's a really nice name." That would be when he looked up...and my stomach did flip-flops.

Those deep azure eyes...really did have an effect on me.

* * *

><p>Well 8UU **that would be Chapter 1...and yes, I will also try my very best to update weekly, no guarantees though OTL**

Anyway, leave reviews, critiques... and cookies :D

See you next time!

~Whim

2. Erasing Illusions

WHAT! SHE UPDATED, SHE _FINALLY_ UPDATED?

ohyeah bbys =u= I'm back, I just had to hop over a small...well, large writer's block, however, I had a little inspiration pop into my head and finally cracked this piece out...unfortunately it won't have much of our beloved blue-haired man in here...it's more of a informational... type... chapter ||D

Anyway, I must thank 14Phantom for giving me a bit of advice to deal with my block...trust me, it was killing me, and I'd like to thank my reviewers who took the time to say something (loved them :3) So enjoy!

Disclaimer: I don't own Hakuouki...only Akane...and a beautiful flying turtle named Mimi.

* * *

><p>Chapter 2: Erasing Illusions

It had been roughly a day or two since my "hospitalization" in that room, and under Chizuru's watchful care, I had made a full recovery

from my wound. Since I still felt uneasy about sleeping in that room alone (I heard strange noises at night), Chizuru vied for me to sleep in her room with her...and that is currently where I was at the moment. As many times as I had attempted to persuade her to let me leave, she refused and insisted that I stay for a few days longer.

She used those huge pleading brown eyes of hers.

...Meh, I relented; she won this round.

Standing awkwardly in her tiny room, I scrutinized the layout surrounding me. It was the same simple tatami-styled pattern that was formulated in my old, temporary room. I moved my borrowed futon over to a corner of her room and rolled it out deftly, smoothing out the wrinkles and deformities. It wasn't because I had some sort of OCD when it came to cleaning, I was _bored. _I wasn't used to sitting idly, that only invited trouble, falling asleep, some deranged sword-wielding maniac trying to attack you, etc. I would rather do anything else, _anything,_if it meant I could be relinquished from this boredom, heck, I'd even sew. I groaned inwardly, slumping face-first onto my futon, '_Geez, why can't I just leave this place...oh right, Oni's can't break promises.'_-

And you'd miss that Saitou Hajime, yes?-

"The heck?" I shot up from the futon, shaking my head vigorously, trying in vain to dispel the thought that ran through my mind.
"W-where did that come from? There is no way that I can feel anything for that guy...I barely even know him...scratch that, I _don't _know him!"

You can always get to know him, can't you?-

"No, I can't! I won't!...Why am I having a conversation with my subconscious?" I flung my head back onto my futon, growling in exasperation.

I stayed there for a couple hours, felt like.

The rough sound of the shoji screen sliding back woke me from my angry fit, revealing a food-laden Chizuru. Sighing, I stood to help her, removing one large tray from her hands and placing it on the floor. "Ah, arigatou Akane-san..." she placed her tray on the floor, opposite mine and pulled two small cushions over towards us, "I thought you might be hungry, so I brought dinner." She graced me with a smile, which I stiffly returned. I was still a bit on edge from earlier.

We ate quietly for a while, the gentle tapping of chopsticks against plates being the only sound heard. I sat mine down atop the small rice bowl, and broke the silent din shortly afterwards. "Chizuru-san, I'd like to thank you for even allowing me to stay here with you...not many would have even allowed my type to stay in residence with them, I am in your debt." I bowed my head slightly towards her, raising a delicate eyebrow when she brushed off my thanks. "It's not a problem Akane-san, but...mind me asking, what exactly is your kind?"

I twitched, _ 'Does sh_e _really not know? How...she's one of us,

'isn't she? '_ I took up my cup of tea and sipped at it, all the while wondering how the girl couldn't know. "Chizuru, I'm an Oni...a pureblood of the original Oni of the East, in fact." Why was I telling her all of this? Riiight...this involved her...in some weird descendant-y way. "My Clan increasingly mated with other Oni, which left a small amount of pureblooded Kitabatake Oni, replacing that small amount with pureblooded Yukimura Oni," '_Making the world a lot more complicated than it actually has to be.' _I sighed and tried to work with her already confused expression, "in short, your predecessors were long relatives of mine."

I sat in smug silence, reveling in my power of somehow figuring all of that out , when she gasped and smiled one of her 'I got it!' smiles. "So we're related!"

"Yes, Chizuru, I believe we are."

"Wow...I really hadn't anticipated meeting another Oni...not since Kazama-san had been here."

Wooooooooooah, back this conversation up..._Kazama?' _

"Kazama?...Kazama Chikage?"

She had resumed eating her boiled vegetables, and mumbled a garbled "Mhmm, do you know him?"

"Errrr...yes, he's my...cousin. He's been missing for a while though." I felt the small furrow in my brow, but that dissipated as I had the urge to laugh, when most of the rice fell from Chizuru's lips. "So, he's been _that_ pleasant to you, has he?" I snickered into the sleeve of my yukata as she picked up the rice from the floor and returned it to its empty bowl. "Ne~ Akane-san, I need you to meet a few people in the morning, okay...as well as go into town with me too, if that's okay." I simply nodded as she removed the plates and cups. Before shutting the door behind her she turned slightly and smiled, "Akane-chan...you act nothing like him. Get some rest, now."

And slid the door shut.

I shuffled tiredly over to my abandoned futon, noting the darkness outside, and covered myself from head-to-toe. Quietly, I grabbed the delicate, little, golden bell that hung from a string around my waist, and gently shook it. The small tinkle it made , tugged painfully at my heart, tears threatening to overflow. "...Ahhh, Chika-nii, where'd you run off to...?" I placed the bell beside me and closed my eyes, letting the dream of that familiar blond with his annoying ways, slip in.

...You said you'd never leave, nii-san.

* * *

><p>Ohohoho ;** A** **; Sad childhood, no?**

I wanted to include the snippet I wrote between her and Chikage, but it just felt like it would ruin the bittersweet moment...so I'll leave that for some chapter later on ||D

Also, Akane calls Kazama 'nii-san' and 'Chika-nii' because he was like an older brother to her. :3

Reviews are loved! ouo/)

3. Crystalline Flakes

Sooo...how long has it been since I've updated...too long hm?

**Oh well, here's the 3rd chapter...don't hate me too much, the action is coming soon.

>

**Psssh, my title makes me think of Frosted Flakes OTL
>

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><p>Ch. 3: Crystalline Flakes

"Akane-chan...psst, Akane, wake up."

"Nnngh..." I groaned, feeling something sharp and annoying poking my back. Snarling, I brushed the offending object (which I'd classified as a finger) away from my body. I sat up, yawning, and shot the culprit a glare through my sleep-clouded eyes. "Chizuru...why did you wake me up so early?" Running my hand through my knotted hair, I attempted another glare in her direction.

She just laughed.

"Akane-chan, you look just like Hijikata-kun when he wakes up...only, much more feminine, and with longer hair..." Her voice drifted off as she noticed my confused, disgruntled, and most likely, angry face.

Who?

As I began shifting in attempt to get up, she decided to speak again. "Ah, Akane-chan I need your help with breakfast this morning. The men are going to wake up soon, and it'll much quicker to serve them with two people working, rather than one." She turned and placed a bucket of water, along with a rag (both of which, I had not seen her with) next to my side.

"Umm...Chizu-

"So, there you go! Wash up, and head on down to the kitchen when you're done! We don't want the men to get hungry~" And with a solid _thwack, _the door slid back into place...and I was left alone. Sighing, I grabbed the coarse fabric and dipped it into the lukewarm water, before splashing it onto my face. Fully awake now, I stood up and stretched, grimacing as joints popped back into place. A small object fell from my chest, causing me to flinch and look down. Uttering a small sigh, I took up the small bell and tied it, securely, around my waist.

Afterwards, I straightened my yukata, and ran a lazy hand through my waist-length black hair, hissing upon discovering a hidden snarl there. Upon further inspection, I discovered my katana was missing. I smirked knowingly, fingering the empty spot on my waist.

_ "Me...dangerous?" _ I laughed quietly, thinking about how right these people were.

I walked towards the door, my bare feet barely making a sound upon the cold wooden floor. _ "Let's see...she told me to meet her at the kitchen, right?" _ I slid the ragged Shoji doors open, and looked both ways, meeting an empty hallway on both sides...neither hinting at the way towards the kitchen. I sighed, _ "Jeez, Chizuru, you could've at least told me where the kitchen _was_."

Deciding to take a chance, I started to the left, walking alongside a banister that separated the building from the outside world. The snow was still falling quite steadily, as the crystalline flakes had covered everything in sight. The winter sun's rays casting sparkles upon the snow covered field. It was, in one word, beautiful. Looking behind me, I placed one bare foot onto the soft white blanket, my left following soon after. I stood there for a while, just admiring the scene.

"What are you doing out here?"

The voice was deep, and definitely unrecognizable. I turned anyway, and met a rather tall man with rich brown hair and blue* eyes to match. I guessed that he also lived here, and bowed quickly. "I was admiring the view...is it a problem?" I hadn't intended for my reply to sound so blunt, but according to the blinding smile the man sent me, it hadn't affected him much.

"No, it's fine. So, you must be the newest addition to our little group, huh? Little Chizuru wasn't kidding...you do look like Hijikata-san, in a much prettier way of course." He winked and grinned, to which I glared. "Anyway, I'm Shinpachi Nagakura, and you are?"

"Kitabatake Akane." I shifted uncomfortably, stretching my toes a bit.

"Nice name, very suitable for you...well now, aren't you cold? Come to the kitchen and warm up a bit."

_ "Oh right, kitchen! I need to help Chizuru!" _ I trudged back up to the small landing, kicking snow off my feet as I went. As I reached Shinpachi, his eyes were wide for some unknown reason. "Anything wrong?" I asked.

"You're...not wearing any shoes?"

Oh. "Ahh...well, the snow doesn't bother me much, and I always walk around like this." I smirked as he shook his head in disbelief and began leading the way to the kitchen.

Upon reaching our destination, I could see Chizuru hard at work preparing multiple trays. I stepped inside the warm room and took two from her hands. "Sorry I came so late Chizuru-chan. I can still help carry these for you." I gave her one of my (rare) warm smiles, of which she returned.

"Arigatou, Akane-chan...the room is straight through the doors to your left. Shinpachi-san, don't eat the food yet!" Following her directions, I arrived in a small room, similar to the room I slept in. Instead of staring at the room this time, I sat the trays down in front of the awaiting cushions. It wasn't long before Chizuru and Shinpachi filed in, placing the remaining trays on the floor as well.

Stretching, Shinpachi stood up and waved at us, "Well, I go find the guys...be right back, Chizuru. See ya, pretty lady." He grinned ear-to-ear and disappeared around the corner. I swear my eye twitched.

I heard a giggle, and turned to Chizuru, who was hiding her smile behind her hand. "It seems as though Shinpachi-san likes you, very much so too."

"...Hmph." I turned and sat in front of my appointed tray. Poking around at the rice, I wondered what Chikage was doing right now, and sighed at the thought. The door slid back open a moment later to reveal three men walking through it. Shinpachi, a red-headed man, and Saitou. I admit, I was genuinely curious about that man, he always seemed so reserved and quiet, not to mention I'd like to see how good he was with a sword.

"Good morning, Harada-san, Saitou-san." Chizuru greeted them warmly, as Shinpachi went ahead and began eating. The red-headed one smiled in response and sat next to Shinpachi. Saitou bowed slightly and took his seat, which happened to be across from me.

Great.

A whispered 'Itadakimasu', and we all begin eating (well except for Shinpachi, who already started). I can barely focus on eating, thanks to those deep blue eyes that keep boring into my head. He wasn't watching...no, it was more like _analyzing, _like I was some sort of predator (weellllll...does oni count?).

The repetitive sound of chewing and crunching filled the room, only broken by competitive banter between Shinpachi and the Harada guy. Finally, looking up from her food, Chizuru broke the awkward tension between Saitou and me.

"Saitou-san, where's Hijikata?"

"Hm?...Oh, he's still asleep."

â€|. .

I still don't know who this Hijikata guy is.

* * *

><p>She blocked and parried, deflecting his advances with her katana, she was nearly invisible. Easily keeping up with her movements, he continued to strike, red eyes narrowing in attempt to find a weakness. Smirking, she dissipated as his sword ran through her form, quickly coalescing behind him to land a blow to the waist. He fell, and rolled over to look up into her smiling face.</p>

"Kazama-san, you've improved...you're still healing, but you have come a long way." She helped him stand up, and brushed dried grass from his back. Rolling his ruby eyes, he bent and picked the woman up, bridal style, and began carrying her back to the small house they shared. "Shiki, if I can pick you up like this, I'll be perfectly fine to live on my own, you know." He bent and kissed her neck, teasing her.

She smiled and shook her head, "No, you're staying right here until you are 100% better."

"Tch, fine...but I want my 10 kids."

* * *

><p>Annnnd CUT 8U I had to add that last sentence in, just for my buddy XD

**Well, not much, but I tried to include more of the lesser extent characters...plus Kazama is alive! *u*

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4. Steely Gaze

Okayyyyy...4th Chapter is up! I finally got a little more action in here, I hope it's to your satisfaction. There's a new character now! I hope you'll enjoy him (as much as I did).

Also, in this chapter I tried to keep Hijikata as in character as possible...I didn't want him to be overly strict until it bordered abusive, ya know? /shot He's one of those tough characters.

Well, I'm done rambling. Proceed.

* * *

><p>Ch. 4: Brother

Breakfast had long been cleared away by both Chizuru and I, however, now I was being sent on a wild goose chase, looking for the seemingly popular Hijikata. Apparently, he had yet to wake up, and it was now _my _job to find and wake him up...if he wasn't already.

Sighing, I slid yet _another _shoji screen closed. So far, I had been through at least five rooms, all with no luck. _How hard is it to find one sleeping man?_ Currently, my mind was raging as I opened another door, only to find the room empty. Bare feet slapping against the cold wood floor, I made my way down the hall towards the next set of rooms and... ran into a wall. Groaning, I rubbed at my nose, and looked up, stunned to find, not a wall, but a man.

He was rather tall, with long black hair cascading down his back. A semi-muscular build; however, what really struck me was his eyes. They were a much deeper purple than mine...a lavender compared to my lilac. The glare he was currently sending me though, had me cringing in my place. _Nyeh...I think someone woke up on the wrong side of the futon, this morning...although- _I broke myself out of my

thoughts, and took a deep breath, "Ehm, sorry for bumping into you, sir, but do you happen to know where I can find Hijikata-san?"

He turned and faced me, sighing as he did. "That would be me, can I help you with something, strange woman?"

_Strange woman? I'll have you know, I can separate your head from your body in a second! _I chuckled lightly, feeling my brow twitch a bit in slight agitation. "My name is Akane, it's nice to finally meet you, Hijikata-san." I was careful not to put too much emphasis on 'name', just enough to make him remember it. I gave him a slight bow and stood back up... to read his slightly amused expression. I growled. In my head of course.

"The feeling is mutual, Akane-san. Though I care to wonder, why are you trying to find me?"

Tch. I smirked and registered this man as a benevolent challenge. This should be fun. "Ah, well Chizuru-chan sent me to tell you that your breakfast is ready...since you didn't come to eat with everyone else."

A small smile graced his lips, and he turned in the direction of the kitchen. Speaking in a much gentler tone, he whispered, "Thank you for telling me, I appreciate it."

"Sure, no problem." I shrugged nonchalantly at that...hey, gratitude had never been my thing.

Before I could leave though, he beckoned me over with a flick of his hand. "Follow me if you will, I'd like to speak with you."

"Ah...well, okay." I wasn't quite sure as to why he wanted to speak with me, however, his voice gave the hint that I didn't quite have a choice in this. Albeit rather reluctantly, I followed him back to the kitchen. On the way, I couldn't help but notice that he got breathless rather quickly. Was he sick...injured? I sighed; why did I even care? I wasn't even supposed to be here, I was supposed to be looking for Kazama. Groaning inwardly, I dragged my feet across the wooden floor and followed Hijikata into the dimly lit dining room. Looking around once, he walked into the kitchen.

There, we both found Chizuru, hard at work, stirring a pot of, what looked like, more soup. Probably for lunch, I shook my head at the thought; all this woman did was cook!

"Chizuru, did you need me?" Leaning against the wall, Hijikata smiled wryly, chuckling gently when she jumped and dropped the spoon.
"Sorry, Chizuru...I should have knocked."

"Ah! Hiji-ah, Toshizou-san, I didn't hear you come in!" Bowing frantically, Chizuru began mumbling incoherent words that I couldn't understand (and really had no interest in). Stooping over, I picked up the neglected wooden spoon, washed it off, and replaced it in the soup. All the while, Hijikata was off on some some falsetto tirade about how "little Chizuru should pay more attention..." or something like that. "Chizuru-chan, don't forget what I brought Hijikata here for." I stood, sending a serious look towards the two and pointing towards the food.

"Ah, yes...Akane-san, would you mind helping me bring his food out?" I nodded. "Good, now Hijikata-san, go wait outside, we'll be there shortly." She made a shoo-shoo motion with her hands, which made me smile and Hijikata laugh...wait what?

Laughing quietly, he laid a large hand on her head, and spoke "Chizuru, what did I tell you to call me, hm?" With a gentle kiss to her forehead and a small smile, he left... whilst Chizuru was left red with embarrassment. Giggling to myself, turned and began ladling generous amounts of soup into a small bowl. "Ne, Chizuru-chan, I would appreciate a little help. You mind?" I smirked as she snapped out of whatever fantastical reverie she was in.

"Ah! Y-yes, gomen." She shook herself, and wasted no time in preparing the tea along with the other foods. As she was pouring the water, she looked at me a bit quizzically. "Akane-chan, you should ask Hijikata-san for your katana back, I'm sure you noticed it missing." She gave me a knowing smile and started to place the prepared foods on a tray.

"Hn...I kinda figured he had it," I yawned and stretched, unconsciously swinging the tiny bell around, "I guess I'll ask him for it, Kazama would probably have my head if he knew I lost it." I'd almost completely forgotten about it.

"Y-yeah"

I stared at her, noticing how fidgety she'd become. Tapping her shoulder gently, I murmured, "You okay, Chizuru?"

"Mhmm! Now you go and give this to Hijikata; I'm sure he's rather hungry." She placed the tray in my hands and pushed me towards the door, "Hurry now, don't keep him waiting, Akane-chan~!" Shoving me out into the dim hallway, she slid the dull shoji doors behind me quickly, but not before I saw the false smile etched onto her face.

Sighing, I tightened my grip on the food tray and walked out into the small, dimly lit dining room. There, sitting cross-legged on the floor, Hijikata sat, seemingly deep in thought. I took a breath, and walked over to him, depositing the tray on the ground, and turning to leave. "Hnn, wait a moment, Kitabatake-san." He mumbled with a chuckle, looking up at me expectantly. I turned, a bit perplexed, and returned to his side. "Yes?"

"Sit, I'd like a word with you." The tone of his voice paired together with that steely gaze of his, suggested that I didn't truly have a choice in the matter. So I sat, a low grumble escaping my throat.

"I hear that you are a... traveler, passing through, yes?"

Nosy. "That is correct, why do you ask?"

"I am just confirming facts." He smiled kindly (a bit too kindly for him), and took a bite of the prepared onigiri, seemingly in thought. "Also, my 1st unit captain informed me that he found you unconscious, soaking wet, and nearly drained of blood. Yet, you still survived with only minimal damage...now, how did you manage that?" He smirked

and took a sip of his tea.

I narrowed my eyes slightly, "I'm not sure myself, Hijikata-san, maybe I just naturally heal fast. Besides, that is a testy subject...I can't- ah, no...I won't answer that."

"Fair enough, I will not push you for information, however I wi-" He was cut off by the shoji door sliding open. "Ah, Saitou, what is it?"

Bowing slightly, the blue-eyed man answered quietly, "Hijikata-san, in case you need me, I shall be outside, training..." looking down, eyes widening slightly, he seemed to notice me, "Ah! Pardon me for interrupting, Hijikata-san, I shall take my leave now." Bowing apologetically, he turned to depart, quickly being halted by Hijikata. "No, no..._actually, _I like you to do something for me, Saitou."

"Name it, and it shall be done, Commander."

The look that Hijikata gave me, did not promise anything good.

* * *

><p>Good grief, I'm gone for forever, and I only write this tiny chapter. NOT. AN. ACCOMPLISHMENT.

**Sorry about this fail of a chapter, school has caught up with me ||OTL A-And my new character didn't show up yet either ; n ; Ohwells, I'll give him to you next chapter (which will be longer, I promise). **

Anyways, you people know the drill. Read, love, and review * w*

**OHOHOH...and check out my frand's storeh...it's byootiful **

/s/9122501/1/The-Real-Soldier

End
file.